DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 462 641 CG 031 558

AUTHOR Okocha, Aneneosa A.
TITLE Facilitating Career Development through Super's Life Career Rainbow.
PUB DATE 2001-01-00
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Consultation on Career Development (27th, Ottawa, Ontario, January 22-24, 2001).
AVAILABLE FROM For full text: http://www.contactpoint.ca/html/natcon-conat/2001/abs/abs-01-09.html.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Counseling; *Career Development; *Counseling Objectives; Counseling Theories; Counselor Client Relationship; Cultural Pluralism; Measures (Individuals)
IDENTIFIERS *Multicultural Counseling; Super (Donald E)

ABSTRACT

Super's life-span life-space theory offers a developmental framework for career counseling. This paper provides a brief overview of Super's theory of Life Career Rainbow (LCR) segment. The LCR feature is useful for identifying the stage of a client's career development and in formulating goals for counseling. The assessment is accomplished by having clients look at discrepancies that may occur between their current and ideal LCRs. They are also encouraged to identify possible barriers and challenges that they might encounter in their bid to reach ideal roles. The paper also discusses specific strategies for career exploration and counseling, using LCR as a framework. LCR is useful as an informal assessment procedure for working with a culturally diverse population, although counselors must be aware that society at large makes it difficult to develop and implement one's ideal LCR. In order to work effectively with culturally diverse populations, it is recommended that counselors empower clients by identifying their clients' strengths; confronting their clients' negative self-talk by carefully analyzing their narratives; advocating for clients when necessary; and suggesting that the LCR be used with career planning groups. (Contains 14 references and 2 figures.) (JDM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 462 641

Les actes du CONAT 2001 NATCON Papers

Facilitating Career Development Through Super's Life Career Rainbow

Aneneosa A. Okocha
University of Wisconsin
Whitewater, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

A. OKOCHA

1

© 2001 (Aneneosa A. Okocha)
The author owns the copyright of this article. You may photocopy or reprint this article, or sections of it, provided that you acknowledge the author.

CG031558

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Introduction

Career development theories are generally the foundation for career development practices (Brown and Brooks 1996; Zunker 1998). Super's life-span, life-space theory offers an excellent developmental framework for career counselling. This is particularly useful for identifying counselling goals and strategies.

The purpose of this paper is threefold:

1. To provide a very brief overview of Super's theory of Life Career Rainbow (LCR) segment.

2. To discuss specific strategies for career exploration and counselling, using LCR as a framework.

3. To highlight the implications of using the LCR in working with a culturally diverse clientele.

Super's Life Career Rainbow (LCR)

LCR is the cornerstone of Super's life-span life-space theory, which comprises two major dimensions: life-span and life-space. According to Super, an individual passes through different life stages: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline or disengagement, when involved in career decision-making (Super 1980; Super et al 1996). These stages make up the life-span realm of the LCR that correspond to the development phases of adolescence, adulthood, middle age, and old age. As for the life-space component of the LCR, Super maintained that people usually play nine roles at specific points throughout their lifetime: child, student, leisurite, citizen, parent, spouse, home-maker, worker, and pensioner or annuitant. He further indicated that these roles are played in four theatres: home, school, workplace, and community. LCR is essentially the pictorial or graphic depiction of these nine roles from birth (growth) to old age (decline) according to the amount of time and energy one expends in each role. It is important to note that in order to effectively develop an LCR one should carefully consider role salience, which is the importance an individual attaches to each of the nine roles. The significance of role salience in career planning has been emphasized in research (Brown and Crace 1996; Cook 1996; Nevill and Super 1986; Super 1980). A standardized assessment tool for measuring the role salience was developed (Cook 1996;

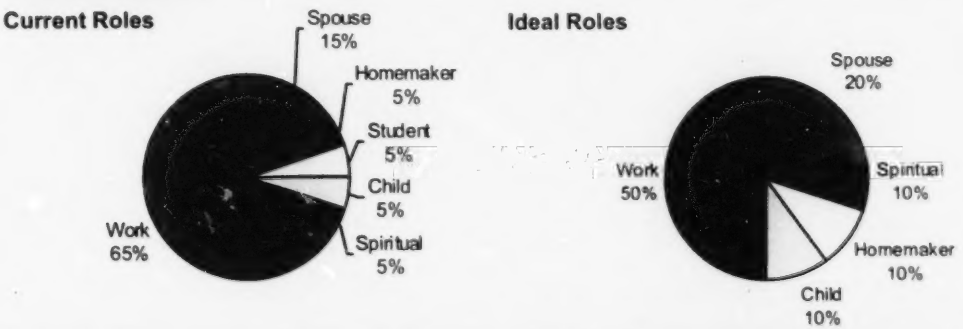
Nevill and Super (1986). Super also asserted that as one moves through the life stages and juggles the various life roles, especially the work role, one's self-concept is being implemented. This assertion is underscored by others in career counselling who believe that a chosen career affects personal development and satisfaction with life (McIntosh 2000; Zunker 1998).

Strategies for Using LCR in Career Counselling

Super's life-span feature is useful for identifying the stage of a client's career development, and in formulating goals for counselling. For instance, if a counsellor determines that a client is at Super's exploration stage, one counselling goal may be to help the client narrow personal career choices, or better still, commit to one choice. An illustration of this scenario would be a college sophomore who has difficulties picking out a major because so many disciplines seem interesting. Helping the student make an informed decision when choosing a major will then be the primary focus of the counselling sessions.

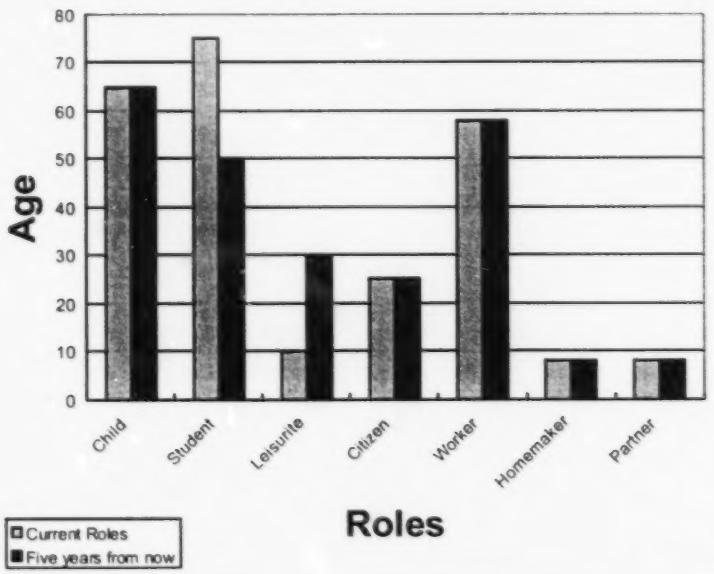
The life-space segment of the LCR can be used as an effective qualitative assessment tool. This assessment is accomplished mainly in two ways. First, clients are asked to develop their current and ideal LCRs. If there are discrepancies between the two, as shown in figure 1, clients are then directed to discuss plans to attain ideal LCR. They are also encouraged to identify possible barriers and challenges that they might encounter in their bid to reach ideal roles. Suggestions on how the clients could work towards attaining ideal roles while effectively tackling any challenges would then be discussed.

Figure 1 Current and Future Life Career Rainbow



LCR may also be used to encourage clients to begin to think about their future roles in relation to career planning. For instance, clients are urged to consider specific roles through their LCRs that they envision playing five to ten years from now (see figure 2). This helps clients plan ahead by setting up tentative reachable goals. The counsellor then collaborates with the clients in identifying useful strategies for attaining their goals. In my experience, some clients are quite creative with pictorial and graphic illustrations of their LCRs. Some use computer graphics, pie charts, histograms, or collages to depict their LCRs. Others incorporate roles in addition to the original nine roles identified by Super, for example, the spiritual role. And, clients who are in gay or lesbian relationships include the "partner" role.

Figure 2 Current and Future Life Career Rainbow



Implications for Working with Culturally Diverse Populations

The term *culturally diverse populations* is used in this context broadly, to refer to individuals marginalized by the majority in the society. This group includes ethnic minorities and persons

of colour, gays and lesbians and bisexuals, and persons with disabilities (Atkinson and Hackett 1998; Corey 2001; Hays 1996; Sue and Sue 1999; Zunker 1998).

LCR is useful as an informal assessment procedure for working with a culturally diverse population (Okocha 1998). However, it is important for counsellors to become aware of difficulties that they may encounter when using LCR with this group. One is the belief or perception of some culturally different persons that society at large makes it difficult for them to develop and implement their ideal LCR because of racism and discrimination (Okocha 1994). Another challenge is the lack of visible positive role models, making it difficult to visualize realization of ideal LCR. Another hurdle related to lack of positive role model is associated with self-efficacy issues.

In light of these difficulties and in order to use the LCR effectively with culturally diverse populations, it is recommended that the counsellor do the following:

1. Empower the clients appropriately by positively identifying their known strengths, especially their functional and transferable skills as reflected in the roles identified in their LCR.

2. Confront clients' negative self talk by carefully analyzing their narratives.

3. Advocate for the clients when necessary; for example, when clients encounter racist or discriminatory prospective employers.

4. It is suggested that the LCR be used with career planning groups. The group dynamic process provides opportunity for support and insight for group members.

In conclusion, I have found the LCR to be a powerful and practical tool for career exploration and planning, especially for clients who are artistic, less verbal, visual, and tactile learners. Such clients have indicated that the LCR provided them with a useful medium for expressing themselves. The tool works well with both individuals and groups. It is also effective for working with clients in various settings—public schools, post-secondary institutions, community agencies, and the corporate workplace.

Bibliography

Atkinson, Donald R., and Gail Hackett. *Counseling Diverse Populations.* 2nd ed. Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 1998.

Brown, Duane, and Linda Brooks. *Career Choice and Development.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1996.

Brown, D., and R.K. Crace. "Values in Life Role Choices and Outcomes: A Conceptual Model." *Career Development Quarterly* 44, 3 (1996): 211–223.

Cook, E.P. "Role Salience and Multiple Role: A Gender Perspective." *The Career Development Quarterly* 43 (1996): 85–95.

Corey, Gerald. *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy.* Belmont and Stanford, CA: Wadsworth/Thomas Learning, 2001.

Hays, P.A. "Addressing the Complexities of Culture and Gender in Counseling." *Journal of Counseling and Development* 74 (1996): 332–338.

McIntosh, I.P. "Life Career Development: Implications for School Counselors." *Education* 120, 4 (2000): 621–625.

Nevill, Dorothy, and Donald E. Super. *The Salience Scale: Theory, Application and Research.* Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1986.

Okocha, A.A. "Using Qualitative Appraisal Strategies in Career Counseling." *Journal of Employment Counseling* 35, 3 (1998): 151–159.

———. "Preparing Racial Ethnic Minorities for the Workforce 2000." *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 22, 2 (1994): 106–114.

Sue, Derald W., and David Sue. *Counseling the Culturally Different: Theory and practice.* New York: John Wiley, 1999.

Super, D.E. "A Life-Span, Life-Space Approach to Career Development." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 16 (1980): 282–298.

Super, D.E., M.L. Savickas, and C.M. Super. "The Life-Span, Life-Space Approaches to Careers." In D. Brown, L. Brooks and Associates, *Career Choice and Development,* 3rd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996: 121–178.

Zunder, Vernon G. *Career Counseling: Applied Concepts of Life Planning.* 5th ed. Pacific: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1998.